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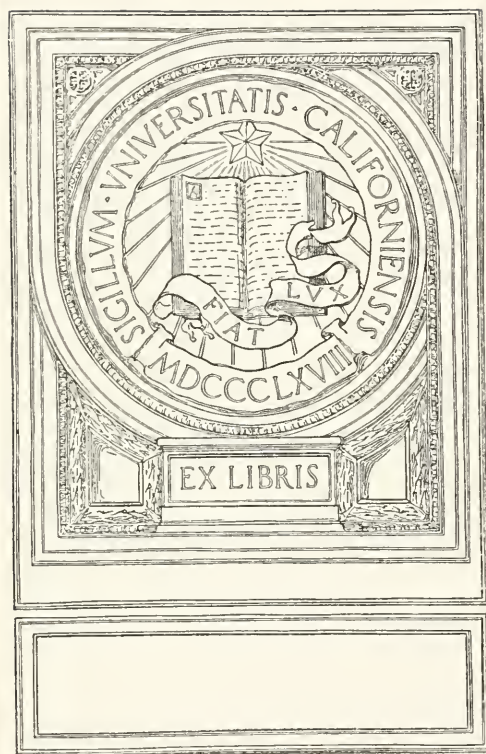
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MOZART

BY
SIR FREDERIC COWEN

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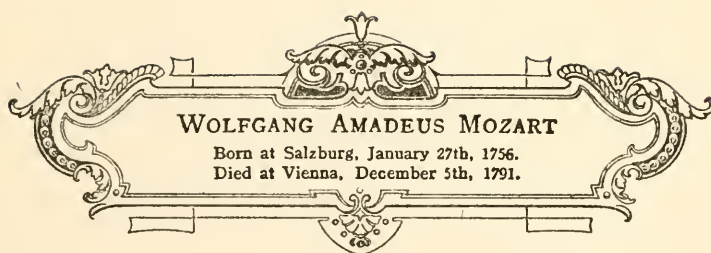
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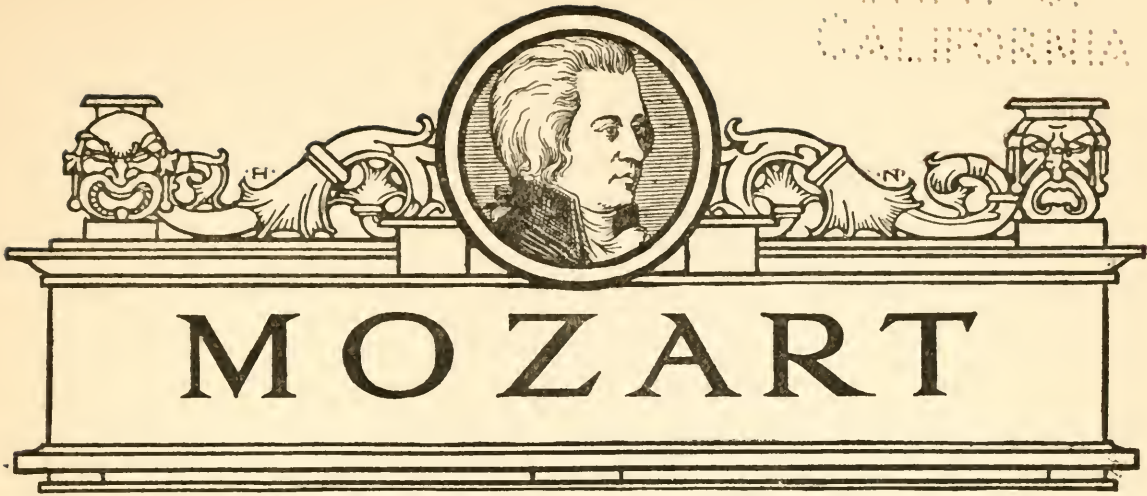
MOZART.

After the picture by C. Jäger. Photo Bruckmann, Munich.



WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Born at Salzburg, January 27th, 1756.
Died at Vienna, December 5th, 1791.



LITTLE boy of four is seated at a desk, hard at work composing. He dips his pen to the bottom of the inkstand and makes a blot each time he puts it on the paper, wiping this out with his hand and going on writing. His father is standing at the boy's side, while tears of happiness and admiration fall from his eyes. 'Look,' he says to a friend, 'how correctly

it is all written, only it is of no use because it is too difficult for any one to play.' 'That is just why it is called a concerto,' replies the youthful genius; 'people must practise it until they can play it perfectly. This is how it should go!' The child goes to the piano and makes an attempt to play the composition, but his tiny fingers are hardly equal to the task, and can do no more than give a mere outline of the ideas that have emanated from his precocious brain.

Two years pass. The scene is at the Court of Vienna. The Emperor is testing the little musician's skill, making him, in joke, play with one finger only, and with the keyboard covered. The Empress then takes him on her lap and lovingly fondles and kisses him, to which he responds with all the frank innocence of an unspoilt child.

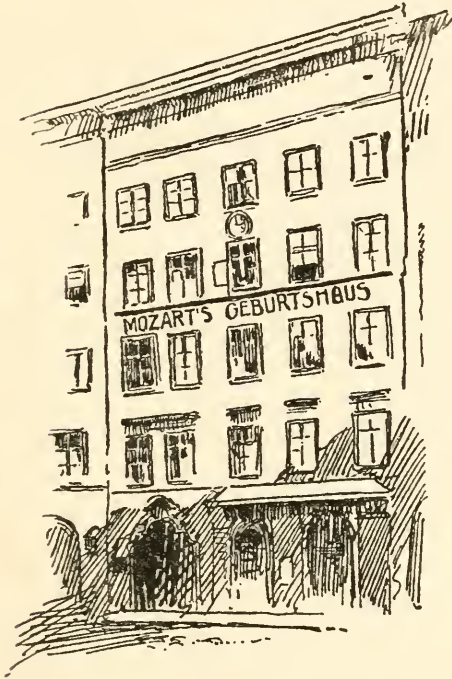
The boy has grown into a youth. He is no longer the juvenile prodigy whose gifts have been exhibited to the world, but has ripened into the fully matured artist. He is leaving his native city, in which there is but a narrow scope for his genius, to seek further fame and fortune elsewhere. His mother accompanies him. As they set forth on their journey, his father remembers that in his distress at the parting he has

forgotten to give the son his blessing: he rushes to the window and stretches out his hand in silent benediction—but the carriage is already out of sight.

It is a few months later. Love has entered into the young musician's heart—the ardent first love of youth—and he cannot tear himself away from the place which holds the dear object of his affections. He is tossed between the desire of his heart and his sense of duty and respect for his

parents' wishes: but at last the latter prevails. The golden thread is broken, and the first romance of his life is at an end.

The scene again changes. He has become famous throughout the world. The memory of his early love has faded, and he has placed his happiness in another's keeping. But though success and fame have come to him, the struggle to find support for those nearest and dearest to him is a hard one. The years pass on. The troubles do not cease nor the struggles lessen; and in the end that which the strain of work and anxiety has partially accomplished, sickness completes. And—oh! the irony of Fate—the amelioration of his daily wants, which he has so earnestly sought, comes to him at this moment, but alas! it comes too late.



HOUSE IN SALZBURG WHERE MOZART WAS BORN,
NO. 9 GETREIDEGASSE.

One scene more. The great musician lies on his deathbed, stricken down when barely half the allotted span of his life is spent. The score of his last incompleted work is spread out before him, and at his request the friends assembled round his bed join with him in singing some of its beautiful melodies. Overcome by the thought that he cannot live to finish the work, he bursts into a violent fit of weeping. The music is taken away from him. All is hushed in the death-chamber. Tended by his loving wife, the end gradually approaches. His thoughts are still upon the work which has occupied his last remaining days of health

and strength, and he endeavours by signs to indicate those places in the score where certain instruments should come in, but his powers fail him. At last, he raises himself up with his eyes fixed; then, turning his head on one side, falls back once more upon his pillow—and is asleep.

These are some of the pictures which are conjured up in one's mind by the name of Mozart; that name which is associated with so much that is beautiful in art, and pure and lovable in human nature.

The life-history of one of the world's greatest geniuses has often



ROOM IN WHICH MOZART WAS BORN, NO. 9 GETREIDEGASSE, SALZBURG.

been related, but for the benefit of those of my readers—there cannot be many—who are perhaps unacquainted with it, I will retell the story as briefly and as simply as I can.

Mozart was born at Salzburg on 27th January 1756. The names by which he was christened were Joannes Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Theophilus, but he eventually adopted the latinised version of the latter and, dropping the first two names, became known as Wolfgang Amadeus. His father, Leopold Mozart, was a musician and composer of considerable, if not striking, talent, and at the time of Wolfgang's birth occupied the not too remunerative position of Court composer and leader of the orchestra to the Archbishop of Salzburg. Out of seven children, the subject of this monograph and one sister, Marianne, four years older than himself, were the only two who survived. She also inherited the

musical gifts of her father, playing as a child remarkably well on the clavier (the pianoforte as we know it now did not exist in those days), and it was while listening to her that the little Wolfgang first gave signs of that genius which was destined to shed so much lustre on the world of music.

At four years of age he began to play little pieces which his father taught him, and which he learnt with remarkable rapidity, and also made his first juvenile essays in composition, which the former wrote down for him. It was not long, however, before he was able to write these down for himself, in how correct a fashion has already been mentioned in the opening words of this article. Nor did his wonderful precocity stop at this, for only a year or two later we read of his taking the second violin part in some trios, without ever having had a lesson on that instrument, and getting through his task in a way which evoked the surprise and admiration of all present.

The progress that the two children made in their studies was so rapid that Leopold Mozart resolved to make a tour with them, for the purpose of exhibiting their talent, in the different cities of Europe. Accordingly they started in January 1762; went first to Munich and then to Vienna, where they remained some months. After a short time spent at home they once more left Salzburg, and went to Paris, stopping on the way at Munich, the Rhine cities, and Brussels.

A stay of some duration in Paris was followed by a visit to London, which extended over a year. Everywhere the success of the children was immense; they played at all the Courts, and the public came in crowds to see and hear them. But though the girl was certainly a clever pianist for her age, she was far eclipsed by her brother, and it was the little Wolfgang, with his wonderful gifts, his boyish manner, and unspoilt nature, who was the centre of attraction, and created the most astonishment and enthusiasm. In those days prodigies were not so frequent as they are now, and one can easily imagine the sensation that such a wonder-child must have created in the minds and hearts of the public. His father writes of him at this time: 'What he knew when we left Salzburg is a mere shadow to what he knows now . . . the mighty Wolfgang, to put it briefly, knows all in this his eighth year, that one could ask from a man of forty. In short, any one who does not see and hear it cannot believe it.' That he should be naturally proud of his

son is not to be wondered at, but there was more than the mere favourable prejudice of a parent in the statement, for undoubtedly the praise lavished on the boy from all quarters was fully deserved.

However, even the attraction of such a youthful genius as he was could not last for ever. The London public began to grow tired of the novelty, and though the elder Mozart tried by every means he could devise to revive interest in the little ones, the response to his appeal became gradually less and less, until at last he made up his mind to leave England and to seek further success for his children elsewhere.

They started for Holland in July 1765, but at Lille Wolfgang was taken ill, and, in consequence, they were compelled to remain in that town for a month. On their arrival at the Hague another severe illness attacked both the children, from which it took them many weeks to recover, and it was not until the following January that they were able to make their re-appearance in public. Concerts were then given in Amsterdam, the Hague, and other places; and in May they proceeded by way of Paris to Switzerland, where they played in all the chief towns, and were received with the greatest enthusiasm. In November 1766 they returned to Salzburg, after an absence of more than three years.

During all this long period, and notwithstanding the fatigue and excitement of concert-giving and the constant travelling, the little Wolfgang did not neglect his composition. While in Paris and London he composed several symphonies, sonatas, and other pieces, and some of these were printed at the time at his father's own expense. The reputation which the youthful genius had gained in all parts of Europe naturally spread to his native town, but the archbishop was slow to believe all he had heard, and in order to put the boy's powers to the test and expose what he thought was a deception, he had him shut up in a room in the



MOZART IN HIS NINTH YEAR.
ORIGINAL IN THE MOZARTEUM IN SALZBURG.

palace, and giving him the words of a sacred cantata, bade him remain there until he had set them to music. For more than a week the little prisoner was confined to his cell, seeing no one except the servant who

brought him his food. Judge of the surprise when at the end of the time the score was produced, and being tried by the Court band, was pronounced by all present to be a delightful and musicianly work. The archbishop had, of course, to confess his mistake, and to acknowledge himself convinced of the boy's wonderful gifts. After pursuing his interrupted studies at home for a year or so, Wolfgang again visited Vienna with his family. But things were no longer as before, and the Viennese public did not find the same attraction in the young artist of twelve as they had previously done in the juvenile prodigy; moreover, the musicians began to fear him as a rival—the greatest compliment they could have paid him—and surrounded him on all sides with envy and jealousy. Even the performance of the opera *La Finta Semplice*, which the Emperor had commissioned him to compose, had to be abandoned on account of the many intrigues of his antagonists. But he was somewhat consoled for this disappointment by the production, at a friend's private theatre, of another little operetta he had written — *Bastien and*



BRONZE STATUE OF MOZART BY BARRIAS,
IN THE LUXEMBOURG.

Bastienne. On his return to Salzburg a further consolation awaited him, as the archbishop, to make amends for his former distrust, had the neglected opera *La Finta Semplice* performed at the palace, and also appointed the young composer leader of his orchestra—an appointment which, though carrying with it a mere nominal salary, was still a great honour for a boy of his age. At the end of 1769, the father and son again

left Salzburg and went for a tour through the principal cities of Italy, which lasted two years. The same success and enthusiasm attended the young musician's performances in this country as everywhere else ; indeed, his success was perhaps more legitimate, as he was judged solely on his merits, and without the curiosity and astonishment attaching to the child with which former publics had regarded him. He was honoured on all sides ; the Pope decorated him with the order of the ' Golden Spur ' ; and the Philharmonic Society of Bologna elected him as one of their members. He also received a commission to write an opera for Milan, which work, *Mitridate Rè di Ponto*, was produced there during his stay and performed twenty times in succession to crowded houses. This success brought him two other commissions, one from the Empress Maria Theresa for a serenata, *Ascanio in Alba*, in honour of the marriage of the Archduke Ferdinand, and the other for a new opera to be produced at Milan the next year. The serenata was written in a fortnight, and very favourably received ; and indeed, it was this work which gave rise to Hasse the composer's well-known prophecy that ' this boy will cause us all to be forgotten ! ' The Milan opera, *Lucio Silla*, was composed soon afterwards, and its production met with the same, or even greater success than his previous one *Mitridate* had done.

From 1773 to 1777, with the exception of further visits to Milan and Vienna, and one to Munich to produce his opera *La Finta Giardiniera*, Mozart remained in Salzburg, pursuing his studies and composing works of every description. But these four years of his life were far from happy. His old patron had died, and the new archbishop cared nothing for music ; and although the young musician still retained his position at the Court, the want of appreciation and the contempt shown him by his tyrannical employer made his life unbearable. Moreover, his salary was ridiculously small (about £15 per annum), and he received no extra remuneration for the work he did as composer in connection with his office. He was now a young man of twenty-one, and felt that the moment had come when he should endeavour to better his position, which seemed very unlikely in his native town, where the necessary artistic atmosphere was entirely lacking ; so he at last determined to apply for his discharge, which was grudgingly granted, and he once more set off in quest of further fame and some position in which he could earn a more substantial livelihood than hitherto. This time his mother accompanied

him, as his father was unable to leave Salzburg, and did not like the idea of sending his son into the world by himself. Almost the first place they visited was Mannheim, and almost the first thing he did when they arrived there was to fall in love. The young lady's name was Aloysia Weber; she possessed considerable beauty and was a gifted singer, and no doubt these qualities were largely responsible for the impression she made on him. In any case, so smitten was he that he desired to marry her at once and take her with him to Italy, but the elder Mozart, hearing

of the attachment, and knowing the inadvisability of his son's fettering himself at such an early age, refused his consent to the union; and Wolfgang, out of that love and filial obedience which had existed in his nature from childhood, gave way to his father's wishes, though not without a severe struggle. The parting from his loved one was a hard trial, but, as time proved, it was for the best, for when they met again she had almost forgotten him, and not long after this she became the wife of another. Sad at heart, Mozart went to Paris, in the hope of finding scope there for his genius,



RELIEF OF MOZART AS A YOUNG MAN.

but he had scarcely settled down when a further and greater misfortune befell him, for his mother was taken seriously ill and died in his arms. Overcome by grief, he felt it impossible to remain any longer in Paris, so he once more returned home, stopping on the way at Strassburg (where he gave some concerts) and also at Mannheim.

Mozart's position in Salzburg was now, for the moment, somewhat better than it previously had been: the archbishop, seeing his mistake in allowing such a genius to leave his service, had re-installed him in the capacity of second kapellmeister and organist, with the small salary of £40 a year, and permission to absent himself whenever he wanted to write an opera. But the ecclesiastic's motives were at bottom only of a

dog-in-the-manger character, for his treatment of his *protégé* continued on the same churlish lines as before, and, indeed, reached such a pitch that the rupture, which came before very long, was unavoidable. In the meanwhile, however, Mozart's official worries and troubles did not interfere with his assiduity in composition: he wrote incessantly, and some of his best works belong to this period—notably the Mass in C, two serenades, and the opera *Idomeneo*, commissioned for and produced at Munich in 1781. This latter work was a great step in advance of any of his previous operas: his now fully-matured genius manifested itself in the greater richness of harmony and orchestration, the deeper significance of the music throughout, and the stronger sense of dramatic characterisation; all of which qualities not only ensured for the work an enthusiastic reception, but stamped him at once and for all time as a great operatic composer. With the success of his opera still ringing in his ears, Mozart was summoned to join his patron the archbishop in Vienna, but only to find himself subjected there to more indignities than he had already suffered in Salzburg. He was treated as a lacquey, made to take his meals with the servants, and was even refused permission to accept any engagements by which he might have increased his income—in fact, insults were heaped upon him to such an extent that the rupture already alluded to took place then and there, the young composer sending in his resignation, and starting on his own account in the city which was destined to become his home for the rest of his short life.

He had now to depend for his livelihood on playing at concerts and soirées, and giving lessons, for although he composed diligently, his works brought him little or no money. His reputation, however, continued to increase, and his next opera, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (*Il Seraglio*), produced in 1782 by the Emperor's express command, was even a greater success than *Idomeneo*, attracting swarms of people to the theatre for some months after its production. About this time Mozart's friends, the Webers, came to reside in Vienna, and the intimacy between him and the family of his former love was renewed. There was a younger sister, Constanze, and that daily intercourse and propinquity which are responsible for so many of Cupid's arrows, together perhaps with the sympathy of old associations, brought about a mutual attachment between the two young people which proved as deep and lasting as the earlier romance had been fleeting. It is possible that the success of the

composer's latest opera gave him reason to hope for better times, or that he found his bachelor life too lonely and insupportable; but, be this as it may, his prospects of happiness would brook no delay, and the consent of his father having, after some reluctance, been obtained, the marriage took place in August 1782.

Unfortunately, the happiness of the young couple was not destined to be without alloy. It is true that the affection they had for each other,



MOZART'S WIFE (CONSTANZE WEBER).
*A painting on ivory, in the Mozarteum,
Salzburg.*

and for the children that were born to them, was a devoted and unceasing one, but Constanze had no idea how to manage a household, and Mozart himself was neither economical nor in any way a man of business; and the income he earned, chiefly from playing at concerts, though perhaps sufficient for a careful house-keeper, was totally inadequate in the hands of such bad managers as they were. The consequence was that, from this time forward, poor Mozart was always in difficulties, and his life was one continual struggle to keep the wolf from the door, even to the point of often having to crave assistance from his friends. His letters on this subject are quite pitiable to read.

On one occasion he writes to one of his rich masonic brothers, Herr Puchberg (who, be it said to his credit, never refused his appeal for help), as follows :—

‘If you have sufficient regard and friendship for me to succour me by the loan of one or two thousand gulden for a couple of years, at the usual rate of interest, you would extricate me from a mass of troubles. . . . If you do me this friendly service, having then some money to go on with, I can . . . work with a mind more free from care and with a lighter heart, and thus earn more. . . . If it should so happen that you find it inconvenient to part with so large a sum, I beg you at all events to lend me a couple of hundred gulden, because my landlord . . . was so pressing that I was obliged to pay him on the spot

(in order to avoid anything unpleasant), which has caused me great embarrassment.'

Later on he again appeals to the same friend, in a still more distressing voice :—

'If you can or will extricate me from a *momentary difficulty*, pray do so for the love of God! Whatever you can spare will be welcome. Pray forget, if possible, my troublesome importunities, and forgive them.'

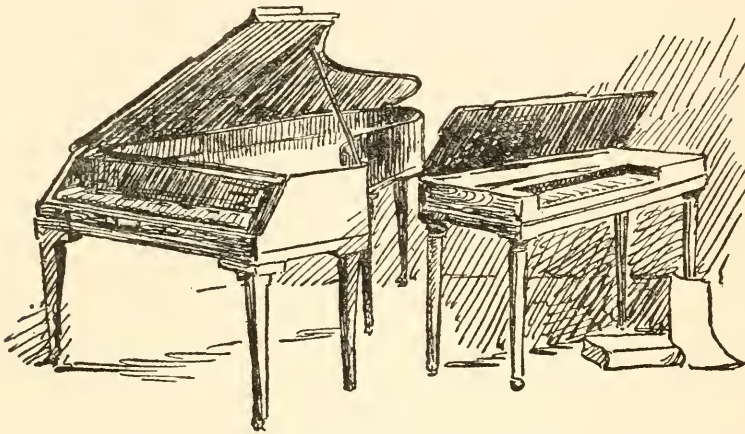
And again :—

'You know my situation—in short . . . I shall be obliged to get money from usurers . . . I am at this moment in such a state of destitution that I must entreat you, my dear friend, for Heaven's sake to supply me with what you can spare.'

Thus, between work and almost daily struggles and hardships, did Mozart pass the remaining years of his life. How he managed to compose at all under the circumstances is a mystery, but his genius seemed to flourish in adversity, and most of his finest works emanated from this period of constant storm and stress. With it all, it cannot be said that his great gifts were unappreciated: his works were successful, though not remunerative; he was much in request as a pianist, and, in spite of the intrigues often at work against him, he had many friends and admirers in the aristocratic and musical circles of Vienna. Among these no one was louder in his praise than Haydn. The famous musician said of him to his father: 'I declare to you before God, and as a man of honour, that your son is the greatest composer that I know; he has taste, and beyond that the most consummate knowledge of the art of composition.' And at another time he writes: 'O Mozart! If I could instil into the soul of every lover of music the admiration I have for his matchless works, all countries would seek to be possessed of so great a treasure.'

These were generous words from a colleague, and one who himself was so distinguished. The friendship between the two great musicians lasted for several years, and in fact until Haydn left Vienna for London, only a short while before Mozart's death. Between 1782 and 1786 Mozart wrote many works, among these being some of his best piano concertos, several quartets, and the musical comedy *Der Schauspieldirektor*; but his next really great success came with the production of the *Marriage of Figaro* in the latter year. This opera, one of his acknowledged master-

pieces, was performed many times, and so enthusiastic was its reception, and so persistent the audiences in their demand for the repetition of all their favourite numbers, that the Emperor was at last obliged to take it upon himself to forbid any encores. This triumph was renewed at Prague, where the opera was given shortly afterwards : the whole city went mad over it ; the one topic of conversation, we are told, was *Figaro* ; nothing was played, sung, or whistled but—*Figaro* ; nobody went to any opera but—*Figaro*. Its success obtained for the composer a commission to write another opera for Prague, with the result that his greatest dramatic work, *Don Giovanni*, first saw the light in that city in the autumn of



MOZART'S FAVOURITE CONCERT PIANO AND SPINET. NOW AT
THE MOZARTEUM, SALZBURG.

the following year—October 1787. Most of the music was composed in the garden of his friend Duschek, in the vicinity of the Bohemian capital, to the rolling accompaniment of skittles, and it is related that Mozart would from time to time take a hand in the game when his turn came, resuming his work again quite undisturbed by the interruptions. The overture to the opera was not begun until the night before the first performance, but with the aid of copious supplies of punch, and stories told him by his wife to keep him awake, he succeeded in finishing it in the early morning, in time to have the parts copied, and it was played at sight the same evening.

The year 1788 was marked by the composition, among other works, of his three finest symphonies, in E flat, G minor, and C major (the 'Jupiter'), all of which were written within the short space of six weeks !

These were followed by three other operas—*Così fan tutte*, performed in Vienna early in 1790 ; *La Clemenza di Tito*, composed for the coronation of Leopold II. at Prague in September 1791 ; and *Die Zauberflöte*, which he had begun earlier in the year, and which was completed and produced in Vienna within three weeks after the performance of *Tito*.

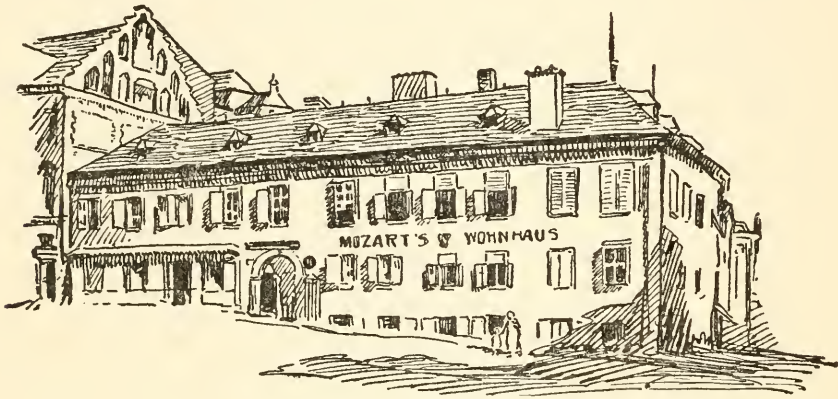
But all these artistic successes contributed little towards the relief of Mozart's pecuniary embarrassments, and it is strange, in the face of his reputation and acknowledged genius, that nothing was done to alleviate his straitened circumstances. Certainly, the Emperor had appointed him chamber-composer, with a mere pittance of £80 a year, but even his admiration for the composer was not proof against Court intrigues, and a better and more lucrative post was never forthcoming. When, at the eleventh hour, a guarantee fund was got up for him by some of the Hungarian nobility, and commissions for compositions offered him by music publishers—which together would have ensured his comparative comfort in the future—he already lay stricken down by his last illness. Fortune had smiled on him too late, and he was beyond all need of earthly wants.

In the meanwhile, however, he worked on, always sanguine, always buoyed up with the hope that some turn for the better in his affairs would come to him. It was with this idea that he left Vienna on two occasions, first for a visit to Dresden, Leipzig, and Berlin, and afterwards to Frankfurt and Munich ; but though he was well received everywhere, and his performances at the different Courts brought him a little money, it was but a drop in the ocean of his ever-increasing liabilities : nothing of a substantial or permanent character came of these visits, and he returned home weary and disappointed. All this constant struggling and hard work was bound to have an effect on Mozart's already over-taxed constitution, and a circumstance which occurred at the time, if it did not actually hasten his end, added largely to his growing depression of spirits, and rendered him less able to fight against the fatal malady which soon afterwards attacked him.

The story is a well-known one, but I cannot omit it from this account of the great musician's life.

One day, while at work, a stranger called upon him, and asked him to compose a Requiem. The price was fixed, but the whole transaction was to be conducted with the utmost secrecy, and he was

informed that he must on no account try to discover the name of the person who had ordered the composition. Mozart set to work and composed several numbers, but very soon the mysterious nature of the request began to prey upon his mind, and the morbid idea came to him that he was writing the Requiem for himself. This idea acted upon his already enfeebled health, and his wife was obliged to take the score away from him. A temporary improvement ensued, but he could not shake himself free from his gloomy forebodings, and the resumption of work brought back with it all the unfavourable symptoms from which he was suffering. At last he could write no more, and took to his bed, from which he never rose again. How his thoughts were to the end centred



HOUSE IN VIENNA IN WHICH MOZART LIVED.

on his unfinished work, how the score was given to him, and his last hours soothed by the sound of the loved melodies he had created, has already been told in the opening pages of this little article.

He died on 5th December 1791, at the early age of thirty-five, and was buried the next day. The sad fate that pursued him through life did not even relent over his grave, and that last respect and honour which his genius demanded were ruthlessly denied him. Never were the mortal remains of a great man laid to rest under such pitiable conditions. Mozart's illness had rendered him almost destitute, and there was not even money enough in the house to settle the doctor's bill, much less to pay for a proper and decent funeral. It was three in the afternoon, it is stated, when the coffin was deposited in one of the chapels of St. Stephen's. Salieri, Süssmayer, and two or three other musicians were

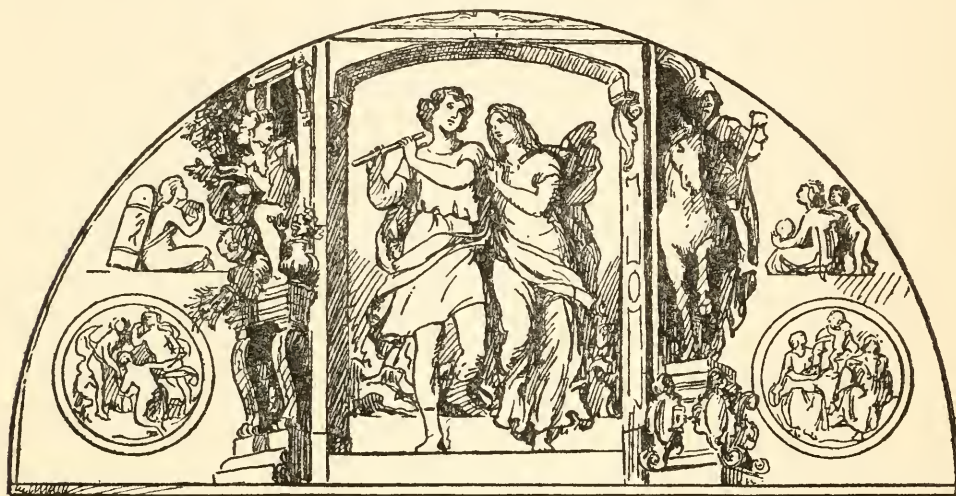
the only persons present besides the officiating priest and the bearers of the coffin. It was a terribly inclement day ; rain and sleet came down fast ; and the little band of mourners stood shivering in the blast with their umbrellas up, round the hearse, as it left the door of the church. It was then far on in the cold December afternoon, and the evening was fast closing in before the solitary hearse had passed the Stubenthor, and reached the distant graveyard of St. Marx.

By this time the weather had proved too much for the mourners ; they had dropped off one by one, and Mozart's body was left in solitude to find its last resting-place. Then ensued a gruesome conversation between those in charge of the cemetery and the driver of the hearse : 'Any coaches or mourners coming ?' was the question. The driver merely shrugged his shoulders. 'Who have you got there, then ?' 'A bandmaster.' 'A musician ? they're a poor lot ; then we've no more money to look for to-day.' The coffin was then dismounted and placed on the top of a grave already occupied by two other paupers. When the widow's first grief had sufficiently subsided to enable her to go to the burial-ground to look for the grave, there was a new sexton who knew nothing, and the exact place where the great composer rests could not be identified, and it remains unknown to the present day. But, after all, what does it matter ? No stone marks the hallowed spot ; but the monument he built for himself with his works is far greater than any that man could devise, and the most splendid mausoleum ever erected could not add to, or take away from, the glorious light which his genius has spread over the musical world of all time.

The number of works which Mozart composed during his short life is so large as to be almost incredible. It comprises twenty-three operas ; twenty masses, including the 'Requiem' ; two short oratorios ; four cantatas ; forty-nine symphonies ; thirty-three serenades, and divertimenti for various instruments ; six concertos for violin, one for two violins, and one for violin and viola ; twenty-seven pianoforte concertos, including one for two and another for three pianos ; nine quintets ; twenty-seven quartets for strings, two for flute and strings, and one for oboe and strings ; one quintet for piano and wind instruments ; two quartets and seven trios for piano and strings, and one for piano, clarinet and viola ; forty-three sonatas for piano and violin ; seventeen sonatas for piano

solo; seventeen sonatas for organ; sixty-six concert arias, etc., with orchestral accompaniment; forty songs. Besides these, numberless other shorter works, such as motets, offertories, dances, separate symphonic movements, minuets, marches, etc.

He excelled in nearly every branch of his art, and there was scarcely anything he touched that he did not adorn with new beauties. As an instance of precocious and intuitive genius, Mozart stands almost alone among the great composers. The lessons he received from his father during the first years of his childhood were about all the instruction



FRESCO FROM VIENNA OPERA HOUSE.

THE GRACES. FIGARO. MAGIC FLUTE. DON GIOVANNI. RELIGION.

he ever had, and though perhaps his *real* powers did not assert themselves at quite so early an age as did Mendelssohn's, for example, his musical perception and command of form were from the first quite extraordinary, and his juvenile compositions were weak only as regards their ideas and the lack of that individuality which came to him with maturity.

He was a great contrapuntist and a thorough master of orchestration, though in this latter respect he never tried to produce effect merely for effect's sake, but used the instruments of the orchestra, as far as its then limited resources permitted, as the natural and unforced expression of his ideas.

His flow of melody was one of his greatest charms—melody that was not only beautiful and expressive in itself, but always appropriate

to the sentiment it wished to convey—melody that was *vocal* even on other instruments besides the voice—melody that derived its beauty from the poetry and romance of the south, with the deeper significance and refinement that belong to the north.

Mozart's great versatility, as I have said, enabled him to shine in almost every form of composition, but it was undoubtedly as an operatic composer that his genius rose to its noblest height. The operas, *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*, are true inspirations from beginning to end; and the never-ceasing brightness and animation of the former, the dramatic power of the latter, and the high musicianship and melodiousness of both, combine to make these works what they are—immortal masterpieces which, in their own way, have never been equalled, much less surpassed.

It is worthy of mention, for those who may not be aware of the fact, that the overture to *Figaro* is without doubt the finest example of the *multum in parvo* in music which exists. The entire work takes only three or four minutes to perform, but it is as complete in itself, as perfect in form, and, in its wonderful vivacity, as truly representative of its subject, as any work of four times its length could be: it is, indeed, a gem without parallel in musical art.

Next to the operas come the last three symphonies. It is not easy to say which of these is the finest. The taste of the listener may incline towards the melodic charm of the E flat, or the delightful spirit and animation of the G minor, or the strength and wonderfully hidden contrapuntal skill of the 'Jupiter'; but whichever he may select, he will find in it not, it is true, modern effects of brass and percussion, but beauties of a higher and nobler order, which only the brain of a great master could have conceived. Space does not permit of my entering into a description of Mozart's many other works, such as his masses, quartets, piano and violin concertos, etc. In most of these the grace of melody, scholarly workmanship, and other high qualities of his genius are everywhere apparent. But, it must be added, there are some of his compositions which do not reach this high level; still, the weakness they sometimes betray is only such in comparison with his greater achievements, for even in these works there is a spontaneity, an almost innocent flow of ideas that make them always a delight to listen to, and which exercise a fascination peculiarly his own.

Mozart's facility and wonderful rapidity in composing have already been mentioned, but the way in which he often composed was equally remarkable. We know what were his pleasant surroundings while he was writing most of *Don Giovanni*; but there are many other instances on record of this unusual power of independent absorption. He could

Chorus

by Mr. Wolfgang Mozart
1755.

Handwritten musical score for a chorus by Wolfgang Mozart, 1755. The score is written on ten staves with lyrics in Latin and English. The lyrics are: "God is our Refuge our Refuge and Strength a very present help in trouble. God is our Refuge our Refuge and Strength a very present help in trouble. God is our Refuge our Refuge and Strength a very present help in trouble. God is our Refuge our Refuge and Strength a very present help in trouble. God is our Refuge our Refuge and Strength a very present help in trouble. God is our Refuge our Refuge and Strength a very present help in trouble. God is our Refuge our Refuge and Strength a very present help in trouble. God is our Refuge our Refuge and Strength a very present help in trouble. God is our Refuge our Refuge and Strength a very present help in trouble. God is our Refuge our Refuge and Strength a very present help in trouble."

MANUSCRIPT OF COMPOSITION BY MOZART MADE IN HIS EIGHTH YEAR. NOW IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

write in the midst of any amount of talk and laughter; he required no pianoforte when composing, but, according to his wife, would take music paper, and, sitting down, would often say to her: 'Now, my dear, have the goodness to talk to me and tell me all the news'—a proceeding which never seemed to interrupt him in his work. It is also related that he composed his opera, *Lucio Silla*, with a violinist playing overhead, and an oboe player beneath, and a pianoforte teacher next door, all hard at work the whole day long; certainly not a very pleasant mixture of sounds

for a composer, one would think, but they did not seem to distract him in any way ; on the contrary, they gave him pleasure, for, as he himself remarked, ‘ they were delightful for composing, as they gave him ideas ! ’

His mind was evidently impervious to all outside influences, and nothing had the power to disturb the continuity of the thoughts which were brimming over, waiting only to be put on paper.

As a pianist, Mozart held a high position ; indeed, as we know, his public and private performances in that capacity were the chief source from which he earned his livelihood. The wonderful executive talent he displayed in his prodigy days did not desert him afterwards, as so often is the case, but expanded as he grew up, acquiring eventually its full powers with the experience and maturity of his later years.

He was also an able performer on the violin and organ, which instruments he learnt with the same ease and quickness that distinguished everything else he undertook.

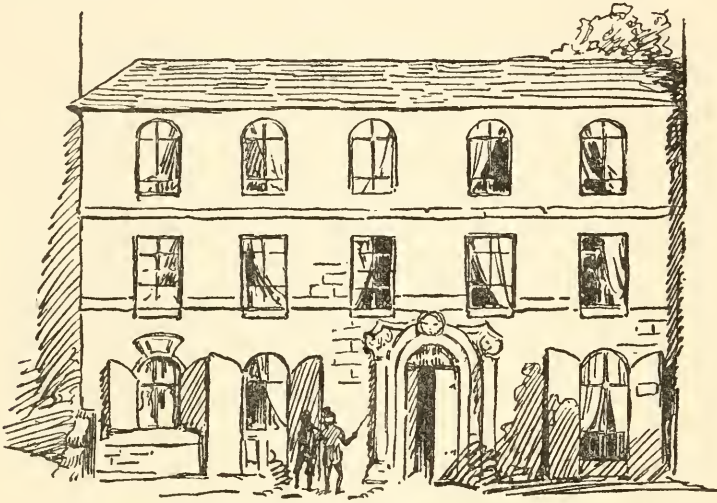
His ear and memory were quite remarkable ; in proof of which the oft-repeated story of his having written down, while in Rome, the whole of Allegri’s *Miserere*, after a single hearing, with scarcely a mistake, is a striking instance.

He loved all the arts and possessed a taste for most of them, especially for drawing ; and his knowledge of other languages besides his own is shown in the Italian letters he wrote home while still quite a boy, and in a few French ones addressed later to his wife.

Mozart added to his scanty income, whenever he could, by giving lessons ; but he was not a good master, being too unmethodical and irregular to make his instruction profitable to his pupils. Still, people came to him, attracted as often as not by his name and the desire just to be able to say that they had had lessons from him. His dislike to the somewhat prosaic labours of the music-master was only natural, but all the same, whenever he found any one with genuine talent or earnestness, he taught willingly enough. Among those of his pupils who afterwards attained distinction were Hummel, Thomas Attwood, and Michael Kelly. The latter was on terms of intimate friendship with his great master, and was entrusted by him with the part of Basilio in the *Marriage of Figaro* on the first production of that opera in Vienna. Kelly was a composer (a rather mediocre one) as well as a singer, and later in his career combined the trade of wine merchant with his profession as a

musician. It was this circumstance, together with the suspicious rumours in circulation that his compositions were not always as original as they might be, which suggested to the witty Sheridan that he (Kelly) should place the inscription over his shop door—‘Michael Kelly, Composer of Wines and Importer of Music.’

Mozart was a great admirer of Handel’s music, and his highest ambition, his wife states, was to compose an oratorio in the style of the ‘Messiah.’ Indeed, he fully intended to set to work on one after he had finished the ‘Requiem,’ but his untimely death put an end to his aspirations,



NO. 934 RAUBENSTEINGASSE, VIENNA, WHERE MOZART DIED.
NOW DESTROYED.

and, it may be, deprived the world of another proof of his genius in the one direction in which his great powers had never been manifested.

This was Mozart the artist. With regard to his attributes as a man, Nature was almost as beneficent towards him as she was with his musical gifts. He was not what one would call handsome, but his face was a pleasant one. He was short, with small hands and feet; his eyes were very expressive, if sometimes rather languid, and he had a profusion of fine hair of which he was very proud. His disposition was very lovable; frank and open-hearted as a child; full of fun (when not depressed by his many troubles and worries); witty and droll in his remarks, and without the least affectation or conceit—in short, a delightful companion.

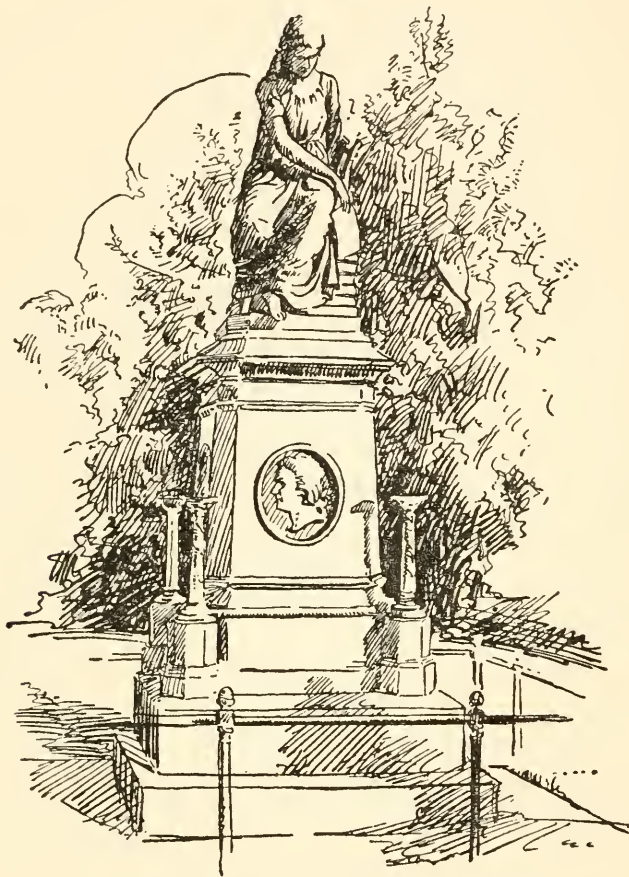
The picture his wife draws of him is very interesting. She says : 'He was generally cheerful and in good humour ; rarely melancholy, though sometimes pensive. His speaking voice was gentle, unless when directing music, when he became loud and energetic—would even stamp with his feet, and might be heard at a considerable distance. He was an angel,' she adds, 'and is one in Heaven now.'

His chief amusements were bowls, billiards and dancing ; of the latter he was very fond, and showed quite a talent for masquerading in character at the masked balls in Salzburg and Vienna, in which entertainments he took especial delight.

For all these happy traits in Mozart's character the judicious training of his early years was in no slight measure responsible. He was never a spoilt child, nor, on the other hand, was he ever severely censured, his extreme docility rendering this unnecessary ; and his natural liveliness and youthful spirits were as much encouraged as were his eagerness and earnestness over his studies. The great love he had for those around him, particularly for his father, made the sense of obedience instilled into him doubly easy ; and this love and obedience remained with him in their full strength when he grew into manhood. Brought up in an atmosphere of purity and simple faith, his principles were pure and simple, and his religious sentiments sincere and unaffected. The presentiment of an early death was often in his mind, but the thought gave him no fear, as he clearly shows in some words he writes to his father. 'As death,' he says, 'strictly speaking, is the true end and aim of our lives, I have for the last two years made myself so well acquainted with this true, best friend of mankind, that his image no longer terrifies, but calms and consoles me. . . . I never lie down to rest without thinking that, young as I am, before the dawn of another day I may be no more ; and yet nobody who knows me would call me morose or discontented. For this blessing I thank my Creator every day, and wish with all my heart that I could share it with all my fellow-men.'

But although he took life seriously at moments like this and at other times of depression, his inherent light-heartedness was never long in returning to him. No one can read his letters without being struck by the flow of high spirits and innocent fun contained in many of them : during his early travels, especially, he is just like a schoolboy away for a holiday, full of everything he sees and does, and, with the exuberance

of youth, writing about it all in the oddest way he can think of, sure, and vain, of the amusement he knows it will cause those at home. Who, for instance, could fail to be amused by the following letter, written in his seventeenth year to his sister, at the time of the production of his opera *Lucio Silla* at Milan: 'I hope, dear sister, that you are well, dear sister.



MONUMENT TO MOZART IN VIENNA CEMETERY.

When this letter reaches you, dear sister, my opera will be *in scena*, dear sister. Think of me, dear sister, and try, dear sister, to imagine with all your might that my dear sister sees and hears it also. . . . My dear sister, to-morrow we dine with Herr von M—; and do you know why? Guess! Because he invited us. The rehearsal to-morrow is to be in the theatre. The impresario has entreated me not to say a word of this to a soul, as all kinds of people would come crowding in, and that

we don't wish. So, my child, I beg, my child, that you won't say one syllable to any one on the subject, or too many people would come crowding in, my child. *Approposito*, do you know the history that occurred here? Well, I will relate it to you. We were going home straight from Count F.'s, and when we came into our street we opened the door, and what do you think happened? We went in. Good-bye, my pet.—Your unworthy brother (frater), WOLFGANG.'

While on the subject of Mozart's letters, I should like to quote one or two excerpts from those he penned to his wife during his enforced separations from her. They are, of course, in a different strain to the above, but they are happy examples of his still boyish and innocent manner of expressing himself, and show besides, unmistakably and almost pathetically, the great affection he had for her—an affection which was maintained, true and devoted, until the very last.

From Dresden, seven years after their marriage, he writes as follows :—
'Would that I had a letter from you! If I were to tell you all my follies about your dear portrait, it would make you laugh. For instance, when I take it out of its case, I say to it, God bless you, my Stanzerl! . . . and when I put it away again, I let it slip gently into its hiding-place, saying, Now, now, now! but with an appropriate emphasis on this significant word; and at the last one I say quickly, Good-night, darling mouse, sleep soundly! I know I have written something very foolish (for the world, at all events), but not in the least foolish for us, who love each other so fondly. This is the sixth day that I have been absent from you, and, by heavens! it seems to me a year. . . . Adieu, my only love! . . . and love me as I shall ever love you.'

Again, a year later, he says :—

'I am as happy as a child at the thoughts of returning to you. If people could see into my heart, I should almost feel ashamed—all there is cold, cold as ice. Were you with me, I should possibly take more pleasure in the kindness of those I meet here, but all seems to me so empty. . . . While writing the last page, many a tear has fallen on it. But now let us be merry. Look! swarms of kisses are flying about—quick! catch some! I have caught three, and delicious they are. . . . Be careful of your health, and do not go into the town on foot. Write to me how you like your new quarters. Adieu! I send you a million kisses.'

And now, what more is there to add ? Many great composers have arisen since Mozart's time, but all their gifts and world-wide renown have not succeeded in taking from him the glory that appertains to his genius, nor in lessening the beauty and charm of his music, in the particular sphere which he made his own ; and though taste and style have undergone many changes, and much of the art of past generations has become old-fashioned, his music remains as fresh as ever ; and even the most modern of thinkers admit him willingly and admiringly into the charmed circle of their favourites.

' That life is long which answers life's great end.'

This may in truth be said of Mozart. His years on earth were few, full of struggles and cares, and with hardly any compensations, but his life's ' great end ' was, indeed, truly answered in the work he accomplished and the treasures he bequeathed to posterity. His fame is immortal, and his place assured for all time among those heaven-born geniuses who have been sent to beautify the world and ennoble the lives and hearts of mankind.

FREDERIC H. COWEN.

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